

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /060 W
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R 111629Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 779
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION BERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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EO 11652: NA
SUBJECT: GDR AUTHOR REINER KUNZE IN AUSTRIA TO RECEIVE LITERARY PRIZE

REF: AMEMBASSY BERLIN 526

1. EAST GERMANT WRITER REINER KUNZE, IN AUSTRIA TO ACCEPT THE
GEORGE-TRAKL-PRIZE FOR LYRIC POETRY, AWARDED BY AN
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INTERNATIONAL JURY, READ FROM HIS WORKS IN VIENNA, FEBRUARY 8.
GIVING HIM CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE, THE AUSTRIAN MEDIA POINTED
OUT THAT HE WAS OUSTED LAST YEAR FROM THE EAST GERMAN WRITERS'S
ACCOCIATION BECAUSE HIS WORK "DIE WUNDERBAREN JAHRE" (" THE
WONDERFUL YEARS") DESCRIBED THE UNFAVORABLE INFLUENCE OF A
TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM ON THE MINDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.
WHILE IN AUSTRIA, REINER KUNZE WAS RETICENT, DECLARING THAT

HE IS A WRITER RATHER THAN A POLITICIAN OR POLITICAL JOURNALIST AND THAT HE CANNOT COMMENT ON POLITICAL DECISIONS. HE SAID THAT THE EAST GERMAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE OBLIGINGLY GAVE HIM AN EXIT VISA. "THE FACT THAT I'M HERE PERHAPS SHOWS THAT WE HAVE AGAIN MADE A LITTLE BIT OF PROGRESS ON THE WAY TO INNER SOVEREIGNTY", TWO PAPERS QUOTED HIM AS REMARKING.

2. THE MEDIA REPORTED HERE THAT KUNZE IS NOT ALLOWED TO PUBLISH BOOKS OR GIVE LECTURES IN THE GDR, BUT THAT HE HAS RECEIVED SOME 1,500 LETTERS AFTER "DIE WUNDERBAREN JAHRE" WAS PUBLISHED IN WEST GERMANY, AND THAT MANY PEOPLE STILL COME TO SEE HIM PERSONALLY. ONE PAPER WROTE THAT HIS EXCLUSION FROM THE GDR WRITERS' ASSOCIATION SHOWS THAT THE GDR AUTHORITIES ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND HIS POSITION OF CRITICAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE REGIME. THE CRITIC OF A VIENNA RIGHT-OF-CENTER PAPER WROTE: "POLITICALLY-IDEOLOGICALLY HE IS NOT ONE OF US. HE IS A LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE GDR. BUT ON THAT EVENING, READING HIS POETRY, HE WARMED OUR HEARTS".

3. KUNZE IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID IN SALZBURG THAT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS PRACTICE TO AVOID MAKING UNNECESSARY STATEMENTS WHICH DO NOT CONCERN LITERATURE PROPER. THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE FORCED HONEST PEOPLE, HOWEVER, TO SPEAK UP, THE SALZBURG PAPER ADDED, NOT QUOTING KUNZE VERBATIM AND NOT EXPLAINING WHETHER HE REFERRED TO THE TREATMENT OF THE DISSIDENTS IN THE USSR, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ELSEWHERE.
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4. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD--BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE SO FAR TO CONFIRM--THAT KUNZE WILL GIVE ANOTHER READING OF HIS WORK NEXT WEEK IN VIENNA. MEEHAN

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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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